

**ETCHILHAMPTON PARISH COUNCIL
CHAIRMAN'S REPORT (MAY 2018)**

1 Meetings

The Council has had five meetings in 2107/18together with the 2017 Annual Parish Meeting the minutes of which have been tabled.

2 Councillors

Mrs Elizabeth Bridewell; Mr Tim Holgate; Mr Jon Nash (Treasurer & Responsible Financial Officer, unpaid); Mr Ralph Smith (Vice-Chairman) and Mr Mervyn Woods (Chairman & unpaid Clerk).

Mr Woods has been mandated to attend the Devizes Area Board, the Devizes Community Area Partnership and sub-Committees and ad hoc meetings.

No councillors have received any payments from the Council for work done or expenses incurred. Their pecuniary interests have been notified to Wiltshire and declared at relevant Council meetings.

3 Accounts

The Council's accounts for 2017/18, tabled, have been presented to the Annual Parish Meeting by Mr Jon Nash, the Responsible Financial Officer. These have been vetted by the Internal Auditor, Mr Peter Hanson, and approved by the Council. The new external auditors are PKF Littlejohn.

4 Broadband

The Council has continued to pursue Wiltshire/BT/Openreach for action to bring high speed broadband to the village. Exchanges of information about the rollout of the new fibre broadband speed, ISP costs etc have been conducted. Not everyone has yet been successfully connected.

5 BT Phone Kiosk

The Council continues to vigorously oppose closure of the kiosk in the light of the totally inadequate mobile phone coverage in the village.

6 Flooding

Wiltshire has been contacted about the flooding of, and mud on, the central village track between the Village Hall and the Old Mission Hall.

7 National Scheme for WWI Commemorative Tree Planting

The Council has agreed to participate in this scheme and has agreed that the trees would be located just outside the fence on the west side of the playing field. Details are not yet available from Wiltshire but species known to be susceptible to disease should be avoided.

8 Play Equipment and Furniture

The new benches, kindly erected by Mr Sanders, were vandalised and needed to be repaired.

Following generous donations from the Social Committee two new gazebos and a new storage shed have been purchased.

Mr Dave Roberts has continued to conduct health and safety examinations of the playing field equipment.

9 Car Parking in the Playing Field

The Council has considered a proposal for possible reinforcement of the Playing Field surface for authorised car parking.

After deliberation it has been felt that the priority is tarmacking the entrance slope to the field opposite Badgers and the possibilities are under review.

Wiltshire has advised that tarmacking this access would be a street works matter and could only be done by contractors with the requisite licences therefore increasing the costs of contractors. Planning permission would be available for the access within specified constraints.

10 Devizes Area Board

This Forum run by Wiltshire Council continues to discuss local issues with Devizes Area residents and Devizes Community Area Partnership and Transport Group. The Group was been persuaded to support the Council's request for a child warning sign on the approach to the playing field opposite St Andrew's Church.

Bus transport, highway maintenance and air quality remain key issues. Similar bodies exist in Marlborough, Pewsey and elsewhere.

11 Playing Field and Hedge

Mr David Stevens has cut the grass in the playing field very thoroughly and has been re-contracted for 2018/9.

12 Highways

The Parish Stewards have been asked to focus on potholes, gullies, grips, grass cutting at blind spots and verges particularly on the C60. They have been asked to review the condition of the C60 after harvest season and consequent farm vehicle damage to verges.

The broken finger post on the Coate corner could not be included in Wiltshire's highways repair budget for this year and would therefore be carried forward by them.

The dangers on the C60 have been reported to Councillor Wayman.

Wiltshire's budget constraints mean that work will continue to be done on a priority basis so some tasks may not be done at all.

13 New Governance Rules

New provisions for external audit of the Council's accounts by PKF Littlejohn have been introduced. Also new EU/UK Data Protection rules are being introduced which are creating uncertainty and more red tape burdens for the Council. Unfortunately the day to day practicalities for small local councils appear to have been ignored.

14 Planning Applications

A number of routine applications have been approved during the year. In addition:

- a Lydeaway - The Council has become aware of a possible new railway station at Lydeaway to be located on the main line to the east of the Clock Inn Park. The original proposal included the construction of a great number of houses to pay for the station. Wiltshire Councillor Philip Whitehead has explained that the application to the railway authorities was premature and Wiltshire would not permit new housing in this area of the North Wiltshire Downs AONB. If a proper rail justification was ever forthcoming finance would have to come from other sources.

Despite its location in Stert and Urchfont parishes Mr Peter Hanson and Mr Woods were able to attend some relevant meetings.

The Chairman would like to record the Council's thanks to Mr Hanson for his contribution.

- b Tinkfield Waste Site - The erection of a lean-to extension and baler shed with associated bunds and works at Tinkfield has been approved by Wiltshire despite the Parish Council's objections.

Particular highway problems at this site on the A 342 have been the subject of correspondence with Wiltshire Councillor Mrs Wayman but are still awaiting reasoned replies from her.

Councillors will continue to report whenever plastic and other material blows from the site onto Etchilhampton Hill using the "My Wiltshire" contact on Wiltshire website. All parishioners are urged to use this contact point to report the A342 road safety hazard to Wiltshire. The more members of the public use this contact point to show widespread concerns the better.

- c Silage Lagoon and Pad - As regards possible new applications by Mr Butler/MrCurnick reported in the Gazette, nothing further has been heard but this does not mean that the applicants may not submit new applications.

15 Illegally Parked Caravans on Etchilhampton Hill

Following correspondence between Mr Woods, Wiltshire Council and PCSO Sam Burnside of the Neighbourhood Police Team, PCSO Burnside has persuaded the caravan occupants to move away.

16 Subscriptions and Donations

St Andrew's Churchyard maintenance fund has been given £250 and £48 for green bin collection. Subscriptions were made to Wiltshire Association of Local Councils, CPRE and Community First all of which provide local support for parishioners.

17 Thanks

The Chairman would like to take the opportunity of this report to thank everyone who supports the Council's activities in many different ways, Mr Whitehead, Wiltshire Council and Wiltshire Police. He also warmly thanks Mr Smith for deputising for him during his recent bout of ill health.

Chairman, Etchilhampton PC
May 2018